

Global SIDS Conference on Anti-Corruption Reforms
“Preventing Corruption in the Public Procurement Process”

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InterContinental Mauritius Resort, BalACLava

The Right Hon Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius

Hon Sudarshan Bhadain, Minister of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional Reforms

Mr Luka Okomo, Officer in Charge, UNDP

Ms Claudia Sayago of the UNODC

Anga Timilsina, of UNDP’s Global Anti-Corruption Initiative

Members of the Diplomatic corp.

Members of the Parliamentary Committee

Board members of the ICAC

Heads of Organisations

Members of the press

Dear delegates, and

Distinguished guests

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honor for me to address you this morning at the opening ceremony of the ***Second Global SIDS Conference on Anti-Corruption Reforms*** on ***“Preventing Corruption in the Public Procurement Process”***.

On behalf of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all, and a special welcome to all delegates from different small island developing states, as well as the resource persons from the UNDP and the UNODC.

In October 2014 in Vienna, the UNODC recognized that a unique approach, tailored to the country’s specific needs for anti-corruption reforms, was required. This is particularly true for small island developing states (SIDS), which often face resource and other constraints in their development. An area that is of particular relevance for SIDs is their capacity to design procurement policies and frameworks that limit risks of corruption.

At the first Global SIDS Conference held in Mauritius **last year**, procurement emerged as one of the main concerns that requires greater attention if corruption is to be addressed effectively. As is well-known, government procurement is at the heart of infrastructure projects, public services and supplies projects, that often involve huge amounts of public funds. For example, the OECD estimates that an average of US \$9.5 trillion, of public money is spent by governments through public procurement every year.

By its very nature, therefore, the procurement process is recognised to be particularly vulnerable to corruption. It is precisely for this reason that Article 9 of the UNCAC requires countries to establish a sound procurement system based on transparency, competition and objective criteria in decision-making; effective accountability mechanisms; and integrity of public officials.

The UNODC recognizes that SIDS face numerous challenges that can accentuate the problem of corruption, by virtue of their smallness; the limited number of potential providers of goods and services, particularly in complex procurements; competitive pressure from foreign companies; and low levels of technology, poor communication and dispersed territories with varying levels of education.

Today's conference, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, is organized by the ICAC in collaboration with the Ministry of Financial Services, Good Governance and Institutional reforms and will be conducted by the UNODC and the UNDP. The conference will, during the next 3 days, focus on some of the challenges facing SIDs in promoting sound public procurement and anti-corruption systems.

A few initiatives have already started to address the problem, and recent efforts include countries' attempts to transition to electronic procurement or e-procurement systems. These are motivated by the desire to ensure greater transparency, providing public access to the different phases of the procurement process.

However, one area of the procurement process that has remained particularly vulnerable to the risks of corruption concerns the management of post award of the contract. Inadequate monitoring and supervision can compromise the integrity of the procurement process leading to time and cost overruns and sub-standard goods, services and works. More work is, therefore, required to develop effective mechanism for contract monitoring and supervision to ensure that

goods, works and services are procured according to contract terms and conditions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ICAC Mauritius has made it one of its priorities to strengthen the integrity of our domestic procurement process. It has, over the years, conducted a number of Corruption Prevention Reviews to strengthen the procurement systems of various public bodies. Last year, the ICAC in collaboration with the Procurement Policy Office revised the Code of Conduct on Procurement for Public Officials. The revised Code emphasises ethical issues that complements the law and urges public officials to uphold the standards of integrity in public procurement practices. It has also developed in collaboration with relevant authorities numerous best practices/ guidelines to address and manage corruption risks in the procurement process.

Furthermore, a risk-based approach is being implemented in Mauritius through the Public Sector Anti-Corruption Framework in 80 public bodies. This involves the profiling of potential risks in public procurement and will allow public bodies to manage risks identified through different preventive channels.

In November 2015, the UN Office for Project Services adopted in St Petersburg Resolution COSP 6/9, pursuant to which Mauritius will, henceforth, hosts and maintain a platform for research and sharing of best practices specific to SIDS. In line with its mandate to undertake research, the ICAC and UNODC started discussions on the implementation of this resolution. Accordingly, as part of this initiative, an agreement was reached between the ICAC and the University of Washington & Lee, Virginia, whereby Miss Hollie Webb, a JD student with the University is presently on placement at the ICAC conducting research on procurement and corruption. On day 3 of this Conference, Miss Webb will share her views on “Implementing the COSP Resolution 6/9: SIDS Research Platform on Public procurement”.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to emphasize that the effectiveness of a sound procurement system depends, not only on legislation and institution, but on the people who are at the center of the process and who are endowed with a high sense of integrity and honesty.

In conclusion, I seize this opportunity to thank the UNODC and the UNDP for their support and technical assistance in the organisation of this conference.

I wish you all an engaging and fruitful conference.

Thank you for your attention.