



**Centre for Democratic Institutions  
National Anti-Corruption Strategy Workshop  
2–4 December 1999  
Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea**

The Papua New Guinea Workshop to discuss a National Corruption Strategy was held in Port Moresby from 2–4 December 1999. The Workshop forms part of a regional programme on anti-corruption that CDI is implementing in partnership with the Asia Office of the International Development Law Institute. The project, entitled "Asia Pacific Perspectives on Combating Corruption: Legal and Judicial Methods", is underway in Cambodia, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea and is being co-financed by AusAID and USAID. The Papua New Guinea National Workshop was hosted by the Department of the Attorney-General, the Ombudsman Commission, the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary and Transparency International (PNG).

The Workshop considered that Papua New Guinea now has a genuine opportunity to tackle corruption given the new Government's stated commitment to the restoration of confidence in the public service and to good governance.

The Workshop expressed concern at the endemic level of corruption. Corruption has become ever more systematised and institutionalised and remains a significant constraint to development and investment, as well as a threat to human rights. Participants agreed that it was not always possible to tackle street crime effectively without also attacking corruption.

Papua New Guinea needs to develop a new culture of attacking corruption proactively. This requires both an institutional and an individual approach. At the individual level there is a need for greater awareness of the issues and for people to examine their own consciences. There is also a need for a renewed commitment by schools and churches to teach children about ethical behaviour.

One of the major themes of the Workshop was the need for the various institutions of government to work more closely together in the fight against corruption. In all the bodies dealing with the investigation of crime, conduct of leaders, prosecution of accused and audit of funds there are men and women of integrity and courage attempting to tackle corrupt conduct but their efforts are hampered by a lack of coordination. A strong emphasis therefore needs to be placed on inter-agency teamwork at all levels of government, in cooperation with concerned members of the public in combating the pyramid of corruption.

The Workshop began its deliberations by drawing on the work initiated by the Transparency International coalition and its National Integrity Action Plan. Discussion focused on the concrete steps that need to be taken to make headway in the fight against corruption. The Workshop also had the benefit of a briefing from the Head of the Task Force on the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) of the Prime Minister's Department. While some progress has been achieved, much remains to be done. Participants focused on practical and achievable steps towards transparency and accountability and proposed the following strategy:

1. Integrity begins with the country's leadership. A pressing issue of public concern is the Rural Development Fund. The Workshop therefore considered that such funds must be subject to greater scrutiny and called for:

- Development and publication of a comprehensive and effective accountability framework
- Annual publication of details of expenditure under the Fund
- A Performance Audit of a random sample of the Fund

2. A legislative programme to support anti-corruption efforts and in particular passage of:

- The Organic Law to establish an Independent Commission Against Corruption
- Whistle Blower legislation
- Freedom of Information legislation

3. Reform of the political system and in particular action, including by the Constitutional Development Commission, on:

- The Organic Law on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates
- The review of the Electoral System

4. Improved coordination between investigative and enforcement bodies is critical. As a first step, endorsement of and support for the national Anti-Corruption Agency as a means of making existing institutions work more effectively.

5. Improved appointment procedures of senior positions in the public service, of government consultants and of heads of corporatised entities. In this respect:

- Appointments should be based on demonstrated competence, education and experience and should scrupulously follow set procedures
- Discretionary appointments should only be made from short lists established by properly constituted committees and be based on merit
- Contracts of appointment should follow standard forms and be subject to independent vetting by a competent and approved government body
- Termination of appointments should only be made according to set procedures and for publicly stated reasons
- The public interest should be borne in mind at all times

6. Urgent priority should be given by the Government to improving the system of procurement to ensure that public money is effectively utilised. To that end, the Government should:

- Review procurement to ensure they reflect international best practice and that only reputable bidders are pre-qualified
- Ensure that all procurement procedures are undertaken in conformity with the law
- Make clear the authority of government officers to enter into contracts binding on the government
- Endorse the “Integrity Pact” concept to reduce the opportunities of bribery and extortion in public sector procurement of goods and services

7. Codes of Conduct and Codes of Ethics are effective tools to supplement existing rules applying to the public sector and statutory corporations. A general Code of Conduct for the public service should be adopted after consultation with general parties.

8. There is a need to adequately fund and resource constitutional offices, oversight agencies and the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, to allow them to carry out their functions effectively.

9. The Government’s initiative to establish the National Government Contracts Review Committee was welcomed.

10. Support for education and awareness programmes such as those initiated by Transparency International is critical. The Workshop endorsed the introduction of ethics education in the school curriculum. The National Council of Women and the Catholic Church for the Churches offered to assist the process of consciousness raising.

In implementing a number of the above steps, the assistance of the international community would be welcome. The Workshop noted that there were existing development assistance projects covering related areas intended to strengthen Papua New Guinea’s capacity to deal with governance issues. The Workshop nevertheless expressed the hope that further capacity building assistance could be provided to implement the Anti-Corruption Strategy. In particular, focus should be on:

1. Training and equipment to strengthen investigative and prosecution capacities.
2. Support for the delivery of the ethics component of the education curriculum.
3. Technical assistance in bringing Papua New Guinea to international best practice standards in government procurement and contracting.