



Sri Lanka Holds High-Level Policy Dialogue on Anti-Corruption Strategies

Government acknowledges that collaborative efforts are crucial to eliminate bribery or corruption



Top-level government officials nod 'yes' to eliminate corruption at the CIABOC discussion held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Photo credit: Indika Fernando/SDGAP. October 2017.

“A prevention strategy is important in the long-term, however, it is vital that delays in the procedural system are addressed as well,” Mr. Austin Fernando, Secretary to the President.

October 2017 –Bribery and corruption are an obvious impediment to any democracy; anti-corruption strategies and corruption prevention plans are essential pillars of good governance. In Sri Lanka’s case, strong commitment of senior state officials plays a vital role in promoting integrity systems that help combat bribery or corruption.

The USAID Strengthening Democratic Governance and Accountability Project (SDGAP) in Sri Lanka has contributed to this process by supporting the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption (CIABOC) move forward with a prevention program to help achieve this wider objective.

CIABOC kicked off this initiative with a series of trainings and focus group discussions on anti-corruption efforts for its staff, state officials, civil society organizations and the media; the first of which was held in October. Among these various initiatives, the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) held with the participation of key state institutions, including the Secretary to the President of Sri Lanka proved to be CIABOC’s winning, strategic move. Invitees included the Chairman and Commissioners of CIABOC, the Secretary to Ministry of Public Administration and Management, the Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Additional Solicitor General of the Attorney General’s Department and all senior government officials. The keynote speech was delivered by Dr. Anis Yusoff, Chief Executive Officer of the Malaysian Institute of Integrity who spoke of the system’s success in Malaysia.

The forum facilitated an open discussion on the importance of developing corruption prevention plans and integrity systems in Sri Lanka. The presence of Mr. Austin Fernando, the Secretary to the President encouraged buy-in from the heads of other government institutions in attendance.

From the discussions at the forum, it seems that buy-in from government and senior state officials and their acknowledgment of collaborative efforts; particularly the urgency of recruiting a variety of experts with different skills is the winning combination in the movement towards eradicating bribery or corruption and strengthening good governance here in Sri Lanka.

“The discussion would help expedite recruitments to CIABOC; domesticate United Nations Convention Against Corruption(UNCAC); and sensitize the important role that state officials have to play in promoting an integrity system in Sri Lanka,” said Mr. Sarath Jayamanne, CIABOC’s Director General.

This first and successful forum group discussion paved the way for the initiation and implementation of a series of other important discussions on anti-corruption efforts. An intellectual gathering to discuss the importance of developing a National Action Plan for Elimination of Bribery and Corruption, chaired by the Secretary to the President will be held on January 18, 2018. Yet another significant meeting is to also be convened by the Secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration to discuss a special corruption prevention program in the public sector. Meanwhile, internal strategies are also being developed to strengthen CIABOC’s Prevention Unit.

SDGAP will continue to work closely with CIABOC and provide technical assistance and support through these initiatives as part of its overall commitment to strengthening public accountability systems in the country.

The focus group discussion was supported by the USAID – Strengthening Democratic Governance and Accountability Project (SDGAP) in Sri Lanka. The project, which runs from 2016 – 2019, is implemented by DAI.

Update to this story: January 18, 2018- It was agreed at the high-level discussion chaired by the Secretary to the President, that USAID will be the international partner supporting the development of the National Action Plan for Elimination of Bribery and Corruption.

