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ATTENTION: NEWS EDITOR / CHIEF REPORTER

15 July 2008

UNDP Study Highlights Significant Progress of the ACC

Dhaka: A UNDP study examined the work of the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) to date and options to bolster its long term sustainability. The study found that the Commission has made significant progress in the past 18 months in building an effective anti-corruption initiative in Bangladesh.

In presenting the results of the study, UNDP Resident Representative Ms. Renata Dessallien said, “the Commission’s efforts have sent a powerful message to the Bangladesh public that corruption can no longer be tolerated and that each person can and must play an important role in reducing it. What is needed now is to reinforce the ACC’s capacity to sustain a long term and comprehensive battle to roll back corruption.”

The UNDP study was conducted following a request of the ACC. From 12 June to 15 July, 2008, UNDP Bangladesh conducted a Sustainability Assessment of the ACC. During this time a team of national and international experts have been working alongside the ACC and other government institutions to examine how the Commission can build its institutional capacity to tackle corruption in the longer term. The team has undertaken its research through a large number of interviews with ACC officials and other experts, case studies, field visits, and statistical surveys.

ACC spokesman, Col Hanif Iqbal, underlined his appreciation for the study and noted that the Commission would carefully study its recommendations. Col Hanif agreed that the organizational capacity to continue anti-corruption efforts must be reinforced. “The people of Bangladesh have a strong desire to tackle corruption and the ACC has the responsibility of meeting the public’s expectations”.

In his briefing to the press, international expert Michael Th. Johnson praised the ACC for its remarkable achievements to date, including sending a strong message that nobody is above the law and everybody must be held accountable. “Given the starting point 18 months ago, the ACC’s achievements to date have been monumental. Very few commissions in other countries have made as much progress in such a short time frame,” he said.

Looking to the future, Mr. Johnson stressed the importance of consolidating the institutional achievements and taking the next steps toward achieving the ACC’s goals.



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Mr. Johnson explained that the Anti Corruption Commission was working through many of the same challenges as other new, emerging institutions. He stressed the need to develop the organizational capacity of the Commission to plan and manage for the future. “It is not surprising given the workload of the ACC that its focus has been very much directed on day to day management of case work, but in order to maintain and prioritize the work of the ACC these efforts require enhanced strategic planning”.

The sustainability mission found that the Commission is hampered by a number of legacy issues which date back to its predecessor; the ineffective Bureau of Anti Corruption. In addition, the ACC’s civil service system needs to ensure that the institution gets and retains high caliber and specialized core staff.

Mr. Johnson underlined his belief that the development of the capacity to undertake a mid to long term strategic plan was the fundamental cornerstone needed to take the ACC forward.

Other recommendations included: improving the management of investigation and prosecution, the establishment of an advisory council of experts to provide oversight and extra capacity, bolstering project planning and management capacity, building a research unit which would examine the nature of corruption and new ways of confronting it (this could include reviewing the process and practices of other government offices), strengthening financial planning and budget management and developing an internal civil service system to ensure that the ACC can train and retain staff with specific expertise in effectively addressing corruption, improving the ACC’s ability to interact directly with the public by establishing “hotlines” and other support for the Corruption Prevention Committees across Bangladesh.

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