Long Session Report: Game Changers

Session Title: **Mobilizing citizens to monitor and report corruption cases in the delivery of aid and basic services**
Date & Time: November 7th, 6 PM to 8 PM
Report prepared by: Nicolas SERIS, Programme Coordinator, Transparency International Kenya

Experts:

Roslyn Hees, Transparency International
Shaazka Beyerle, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict
Samuel Kimeu, Transparency International Kenya
Samuel Rotta Castilla, Proética
Saad Rashid, Transparency International Pakistan
Yama Torabi , Integrity Watch Afghanistan
Michael Carrol, USAID

Moderated by: Roslyn Hees
Session coordinated by: Nicolas Seris, TI Kenya

Main issues raised in kick off remarks. What's the focus of the session?

People have long been left out in the implementation and monitoring of aid and basic services delivered by governments and aid organizations to their communities. Aid projects are still mainly using a top down approach, reducing people participation to validation exercises or baseline and evaluation surveys. The aim of the session was to showcase programs aiming at mobilizing and supporting people at the grassroots levels to play an active role in monitoring and reporting corruption and other types of grievances in aid delivered to their communities. Invited experts shared innovative approaches to mobilize, train and involve citizens in monitoring aid projects delivered to their communities. Drawing on concrete programs and initiatives in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kenya and Latin America, we looked at creative solutions to make aid and services provision accountable to citizens, empower communities to have voice over aid and development projects and to bring key actors together – governments, international & national aid organizations and actors at the grassroots level.

What initiatives have been showcased? Describe the Game Changing Strategies. Please be as detailed as possible, include web urls, name of the initiatives and indicate if local, regional or national.

Integrity Watch Afghanistan's Executive Director, Dr. Yama Torabi, explained that when they decided to do contract monitoring as a Civil Society Organisation, many reacted telling: "and you think donors will listen to you?". There were additional challenges such as working with Local Government and mobilizing citizens at the grassroots level. Framing aid as a common good was key to get people's support and actions. Dr. Torabi said that the program was aiming at "generating an environment of control that prevents corruption". This initiative received support from donors as it complemented their monitoring exercises. In countries like Afghanistan, it is crucial as donors don't have the capacity to oversee all aid projects due to the number & volume of Aid programmes in the country and difficulty of access. More information about programmes developed in Afghanistan are available at the following link: http://www.iwaweb.org/

Mr. Carroll, USAID Acting Inspector General, explained that international Aid represents important amounts of money prone to corruption. For USAID alone, the contribution for this financial year is 14 billion USD, including major infrastructure projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Monitoring the utilisation of important in complex contexts is challenging for the donor community. In Pakistan for instance, USAID contribution is 1 billion USD and there are only 7 auditors employed. USAID thus decided to partner with TI Pakistan to monitor the implementation of a large conditional cash transfer programme. This partnership was successful because TI Pakistan has better access and relationship with host communities. TI Pakistan provided a hotline for citizens to report suspected cases of corruption. This proved to be a good real time monitoring tool. It also benefits other programmes as sometimes people had complaints regarding other Aid projects and complaints were forwarded to the parties concerned. Mr. Rashid, Executive Director of TI Pakistan, explained that the fist hotline was piloted in Karachi and has now been scaled up to a national anti fraud hotline. 26.000 calls have been received, leading to 4600 investigations by the Office of the Inspector General. To read more about TI Pakistan programmes, see http://www.transparency.org.pk/

Mr. Samuel Kimeu, Executive Director of TI Kenya, emphasised that citizens engagement is a strategic priority for the Chapter since 2008. TI Kenya is supporting citizens' engagement and participation against corruption in the delivery of essential basic services such as Water, Education or Health and in the provision of Humanitarian assistance.
Last year, TI Kenya conducted an analysis of the 2011 drought response. The Food Assistance Integrity Study highlighted risks of corruption in humanitarian operations in Kenya with a special focus on the Arid and Semi Arid Lands (ASAL) of Kenya, particularly affected by the crisis.
The study unveils that despite recent progress, people's knowledge of the aid process – who is entitled, what they are entitled to, how they can access it and who

to contact if they encounter problems accessing it- is still inadequate.

Beneficiary accountability systems for General Food Distribution generally lie with the Relief Committees, whose members are chosen by their community and who are the primary point of entry for beneficiaries and non beneficiaries' complaints. District Commissioner Offices are also able to receive complaints and have corruption boxes for written statements. Because most of the beneficiaries are living far from the district centre and also because of the high levels of illiteracy, the utilization of those mechanisms is low. Besides Relief Committees, WFP, through its implementing partners, is also providing information to beneficiaries through public forums and complaint desks during distribution exercises. Those mechanisms are instrumental in providing information to beneficiaries regarding ration sizes, delivery schedules, as well as the right to complaint and where to complain.

There was also evidence that Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) in Kenya, had generally although not always stronger accountability mechanisms in place at the grassroots level.

In a nutshell, the study highlights that investments in beneficiary accountability mechanisms not only improve programming – and play a more transparent and accountable role in capturing concerns of beneficiaries – but also increase the capacities of communities in exercising their rights and entitlements.

The report recommended to:

- Strengthen beneficiaries' complaint and accountability process to support communities in reporting diversion and malpractices regarding humanitarian assistance
- Consider coordinating complaint and accountability mechanisms more effectively between agencies at the community level to avoid multiple reporting structures for beneficiaries and to enhance beneficiaries' ownership.
- Enhance linkages and institutionalization of complaint mechanisms from the grassroots level to watchdog institutions at the district and county level, such as the Ombudsman, the Ethics and Anti Corruption Commission and the Kenya National Commission on Human Right (KNCHR).

Through the Humanitarian Aid Integrity Programme, Transparency International Kenya is committed to foster citizens' participation in the design and monitoring of basic services delivered to their communities. Besides Advocacy and Capacity Building activities, the cornerstone of the programme is centered on community participation. Social auditors will be trained within community members to hold services providers accountable and to report suspected cases of corruption. TI Kenya will also pilot, together with Humanitarian partners, district/ counties authorities and relevant institutions (i.e.), integrated feedback mechanisms to enhance effective, timely and adequate responses to beneficiaries. To read more about the programme, please read http://www.tikenya.org/

In the Latin American context of economic growth and poverty reduction, Mr. Samuel Rotta Castilla, Deputy Executive Director for Proética in Peru, inequality is persistent. Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes have been really poplar and ar now covering 20% of the population. The main challenge is the lack of information from the beneficiaries regarding their Rights and entitlements. In areas that have long been left behind by development programs, local communities lack trust vis a

vis the Government and Aid Agencies. The first approach developed by Proética and its partners was to provide information to communities in a simple and consistent way through posters, public forums and training sessions. Strengthening of local organizations also has an impact on the community being able to follow the delivery of the programs. The second approach has been to work with Ministries and Institutions to foster sustainable change. The focus was on information systems and complaints response mechanisms. To read more about Proética's programmes, visit http://www.proetica.org.pe/

Highlights: What are the main outcomes of this session? What's next?

Experts and participants to the session highlighted that citizens' participation in monitoring Aid and basic services was a key deterrent of corruption. It complements monitoring and evaluation exercises and tools implemented by Aid Agencies and Donors' organisations, enhance quality and effectiveness of programme implementation and, as it fosters citizens participation, improve sustainability and ownership. It was highlighted that citizens' participation can also contribute to improve the low level of trust and confidence certain communities in remote areas have of the Government and Aid organisations.

One of the main difficulties is for people to effectively have access to information from service providers. Institutions and information systems need to be strengthened and learn how to engage and respond to communities' demands. Examples from projects implemented in different countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America demonstrated that ICT and new technologies can improve and facilitate complaints handling. It can also facilitate reporting of corruption for populations living in remote areas, without the needs and barriers of travelling long distances. The session also highlighted that reporting cases of corruption worldwide is on the decline although corruption is increasingly perceived as a number one problem and impediment for development by people. Reasons for not reporting corruption cases can be 1) that people don't know where to report it, 2) that they are afraid of the consequences, 3) that they feel that nothing will be done even if they report. When setting up a complaint response mechanisms, it is thus important that actions and investigations are being handled and that sanctions are being taken. Linkages and cooperation with Local Authorities and the Judiciary and key element of success for the same.

What are the recommendations, follow-up Actions (200 words narrative form)

In order to meaningfully involved citizens in the monitoring of Aid and basic service delivery, it is essential to consider the following:
1. Avail information to the beneficiaries of the projects (this shall includes and not be limited to information regarding the scope, duration, budget, eligibility criteria, services and aid to be provided, periodicity, contact persons, complaints handling mechanisms and appeal procedures.

2. Information provided to beneficiaries shall be culturally sensitive and adapted to the context. It shall consider written and non written materials and information (e.g. billboards, radio clips, theatre scenes, etc).
3. Complaint mechanisms contribute to promote citizens rights and entitlements and enhance program quality and effectiveness.
4. Complaints mechanisms shall be linked to Local Authorities, the Judiciary and other relevant watchdog institutions to ensure that complainant concerns are acted upon and that sanctions applied and are enforced if necessary.
5. Complaints mechanisms shall be better coordinated – consider integrated complaint response mechanisms that allow beneficiaries to report to a one stop point and complaints to be referred to the organisation concerned.

What kind of questions came from the audience? (Please include interesting quotes)

Reactions in the audience highlighted the importance of involving the Youths in reporting corruption cases. In many countries there represent the majority of the population and are more likely to take action.

In Guatemala for example, community monitoring groups have been trained on the use of access to information law. TI Guatemala is also strengthening capacities of state institutions to respond to citizens' demands in parallel. In the meantime, citizens can rely on mediation and actions from the committees or reach out to the Anti Corruption Legal Advices Centres.

The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) International presented their NGOs membership based approached of minimum standards to foster quality, accountability and beneficiaries participation. Setting up complaints handling mechanisms is one out of the six benchmarks required under the standards. It reads "The organisation enables the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders to raise complaints and receive a response through an effective, accessible and safe process" For more information regarding HAP, visit http://www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/2010-hap-standard-in-accountability.pdf

Shaazka Beyerle, a Senior Advisor with the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC) and a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Transatlantic Relations, School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University, spoke of her research and experiences in different countries regarding people engagement and actions to monitor Aid projects. She emphasize on the strategic value of people power as an extra institutional pressure to push for change when power holders are corrupt or/and unaccountable.

What could be done to promote cross-sector and cross-regional work related to the focus of this game changer session? (If applicable)

Exchanging on Best Practices and experiences involving citizens in the monitoring of Aid and Basic Services delivery is fundamental in order to strengthen accountability mechanisms to the beneficiaries of the projects as well as to improve programming, sustainability and ownership.

What should be done to create opportunities for scaling up the proven solutions discussed in the session? What and by whom?

N/A

Key Insights Recommended to be included in the IACC Declaration

N/A

Rapporteur's name and date submitted

Nicolas Seris – 29 November 2012.

_____