



OUTCOME STATEMENT

8TH EDITION OF THE AFRICAN ANTI-CORRUPTION DIALOGUE 2024

The African Union Advisory Board Against Corruption (AUABC) brought together Representatives of National Anti-Corruption Authorities, Civil Society Organizations, Research and Educational Institutions, Think Tanks, and Non-Governmental Organizations for the 8th Edition of the African Anti-Corruption Day Dialogue.

The Dialogue took place in Arusha, Tanzania, from 7th to 8th November, 2024, under the theme *“Effective Whistleblowers Protection Mechanism: A Critical Tool in the Fight against Corruption”*.

The key objective of the dialogue was to discuss the state of whistleblowing and whistleblowing mechanisms across African Union Member States and to promote the establishment and strengthening of effective whistleblower protection mechanisms as highlighted in Article 5 of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC).

During this two-day event, participants discussed the gaps associated with whistleblowing and whistleblowing mechanisms in Africa, enumerated good practices and valuable experiences across Member States and explored specific recommendations aimed at enhancing whistleblower protection frameworks within Member States of the African Union. In addition, the Dialogue highlighted the role citizens should play and emphasized the need to empower citizens by educating them on the relevant laws and available channels for reporting. Furthermore, increased collaboration between state and non-state actors was emphasised as well as the effective use of data to enhance citizen education, awareness and access to information to ensure adequate protection of whistleblowers.

The following were key issues highlighted during the panels and plenary discussions:

1. The inadequate legal structures (institutions, laws, compensation mechanisms) within many Member States underscores an imperative need for a comprehensive

whistleblower law model that adequately provides for the protection of whistleblowers and addresses other key requirements such as reporting, compensation, reprisals and litigation. This should provide clear measures or clauses that enhance and encourage whistleblowing.

2. There is an absence of specialized law enforcement agencies in many Member States that should provide for the protection of whistleblowers and which would have improved response and protection.
3. The situation of constrained financial and operational resources for law enforcement agencies to ensure the protection of whistleblowers effectively.
4. The lack of effective and actionable implementation plans among Member States that have an established whistleblower law and whistleblower protection mechanism, which would ensure that these legal frameworks operate as intended.
5. Cultural attitudes and behaviors in some countries that create a barrier and discourage whistleblowing among the citizens. These socio-cultural issues serve as a major obstacle to fostering environments where citizens feel sufficiently empowered to report wrongdoing.
6. Existing whistleblower frameworks in some of the Member States that do not align with the standards set out in the AUCPCC resulting in inconsistencies that weaken protection in these countries.
7. The perceived lack of political will and commitment undermines efforts on whistleblowing . This affects the establishment of effective whistleblower protection laws and mechanisms on the continent.
8. Though Media has been very crucial in uncovering and blowing the whistle on corruption activities as evidenced by the many scandals that have been brought to the fore by media, they have not been categorised as reporting persons in many jurisdictions.
9. Effective anti-corruption strategies are driven by accurate and reliable data. There is therefore a need for comprehensive data on whistleblower protection and how it is being applied across AU Member States, on retaliation cases, and on actual whistleblower cases. Collating and aggregating this data would provide a foundation for informed policymaking, targeted resource allocation, and measurable progress in our anti-corruption efforts.

Key Recommendations

1. AUABC should design a comprehensive model law on whistleblower protection, which would serve as a benchmark for Member States when drafting or revising their national whistleblower legal frameworks. This model law should encapsulate good practices, with clearly defined standards for protecting whistleblowers' rights, processes for reporting, and mechanisms for enforcement
2. AUABC should strategically leverage, engage, design and establish in collaboration with stakeholders a Continental Public Interest Litigation Fund for whistleblower protection. This fund could provide crucial resources for legal

cases where whistleblower protections are challenged, ensuring that whistleblowers have access to legal representation and are shielded from financial burdens. Additionally, such a fund could promote public trust in whistleblower systems, reinforcing the AUABC's commitment to safeguarding individuals who expose corruption and contributing to stronger accountability measures across the continent.

3. AUABC in collaboration with other stakeholders should support the establish a continent-wide network dedicated to providing safe housing and protective measures for whistleblowers who face threats due to the disclosures made. This network would serve as a critical “safety net” for individuals who risk or potentially face personal harm, retaliation, or social ostracism due to exposing corruption, fraud, or other forms of misconduct.
4. AUABC should facilitate the provision of tailored technical assistance to Member States. This assistance could include legislative drafting support, consultations on aligning proposed laws with AUCPCC standards, and guidance on creating effective enforcement mechanisms.
5. To enhance the implementation and effectiveness of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (AUCPCC), it is recommended that AUABC embark on more reviews of Member States to assess their progress and address challenges being faced.
6. Member States should put in place policy and legal frameworks to support whistleblower protection, they should also establish dedicated institutions for this purpose and allocate adequate resources for these institutions to operate.
7. Member States, Civil Society, and Media should collaborate to empower citizens by educating them about their rights, protections and safe channels for reporting corruption, and the role they play in fostering accountability and good governance.
8. Member States, especially law enforcement agencies and CSOs, the private sector, and citizens should strengthen their partnerships, collaborate and build mutual trust to protect whistle-blowers.
9. Member States should leverage technology on key public services such as procurement systems as an effective preventive measure against fraud and corruption. This will also reduce the need for whistleblowing.
10. The meeting adopted the Theme for 2025 as “ *Promoting Human Dignity in the Fighting against Corruption*”

Arusha, Tanzania

8th November 2024