

Rapporteur's Report  
Karla E. Salas  
Casals & Associates, Inc.  
[www.casals.com](http://www.casals.com)

**12th IACC**  
Workshop 4.4  
Creating an Anti-Corruption Agenda for  
Post Communist Societies:  
Learning from Latin America's Experiences  
November 17, 2006

**12th IACC**  
**WORKSHOP REPORT FORM**  
**FOR RAPPORTEURS**

**Number and title of workshop:** CREATING AN ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENDA FOR POST-COMMUNIST SOCIETES: LEARNING FROM LATIN AMERICA'S EXPERIENCE

**Date and time of workshop** Friday, Nov. 17, 2006 at 11:30 am

**Moderator:** Olga Nazario, Casals & Associates, Inc/Washington

**Rapporteur :** Karla E. Salas, Casals & Associates, Inc./Guatemala

**Panellists**

Liga Stafecka, Transparency International/Latvia  
Kreshnik Spahiu, Citizens Advocacy Office/Albania  
Martha Cecilia Villada, Partners of the Americas/Bolivia  
Michael Geertson, Casals & Associates, Inc./Washington  
Olga Nazario, Casals & Associates, Inc./Washington

**Main Issues Covered**

The objective of the workshop was to look at the experiences of transition in Latin America and post-communist regimes in Africa, Asia, Middle East and Eastern Europe and identify main challenges for anti-corruption initiatives. The panelists established similarities and differences in the processes of transition in Latin America, ruled by military regimes, and those away from totalitarian regimes in other parts of the world. They also looked at some of the main issues affecting post-communist societies. Among these are: conflict of interest, political campaign financing, working effectively with the media, and building sustainable coalitions and networks. Panelists proposed ways of dealing with these issues. They also looked at international and regional anti-corruption conventions as important tools for civil society to fight corruption. Many of the issues presented as key challenges in fighting corruption had been addressed fully in other panels. Thus, the goal of the workshop was to leave the audience the task of utilizing ideas discussed as the bases for an anti-corruption action plan.

Some highlights of the key issues identified were as follows:

Conflict of Interest:

Michael Geertson argued that conflict of interest (COI) occurs when there is an overlap between public and private spheres. On one hand, in a functioning democracy the public official's role as a civil servant is usually governed by a legally and constitutionally-mandated set of ethical principals and values focused on the public good. On the other hand, there is the individualistic tendency to personally benefit from a particular government decision. The workshop focused attention on COI in the public sector and demonstrated that COI is prevalent in most post-communist societies. It is particularly challenging as a result of the dramatic overhaul of the economic systems and the processes of privatization in these societies. Among some causes of COI in post-communist states, also common in many Latin American countries, are the "politicized" and unprofessional bureaucracy, the lack of transparency and weak access to information and the incomplete legal frameworks and bad implementation, as well as weak enforcement regimes.

In addition, some basic elements to prevent/reduce COI were also mentioned, such as: 1. Clear COI policy and processes 2. asset/financial declaration systems, 3. overarching civil

service reform and 4. modern ethics office or function. Ethics offices often provide advice and set policy that is decentralized throughout public administration or the judiciary. In some instances, enforcement and sanction is left up to other bodies. Political will is essential for putting a COI regime in place. If available, it then can determine the rules of what is right and wrong through a legislative and regulatory process. If political will does not exist, then it needs to be built through NGO, diplomatic, and media pressure)

Political Campaign Financing (Latvia experience):

Liga Stafecka asked the question "Why monitor elections?" and discussed some important elements. She mentioned that: 1) Electoral campaigns are subject to different pressures, especially from the private sector that wishes government protection; 2) democratic transition still presents problems in post-communist regions where surveys show low degrees of public trust, democratic legitimacy, and rule of law credibility, and 3) there is evidence that access to money provides power.

In addition, Ms. Stafecka explained that campaign expenses have increased enormously. Between 1998 and 2002, spending on parliamentary elections in Latvia increased almost three times. Also, according to surveys, campaign spending in Latvia is much higher than in many other European countries.

Ms. Stafecka indicated that the TI Latvia experience in monitoring political campaigns focused on the misuse of administrative resources for campaign purposes. This includes not only money, but also, with the misuse of public trust, power, and authority. She commented that the role of NGOs in campaign monitoring is crucial. They help in promoting greater disclosure and transparency and in pressuring political parties to follow the rules. A key aspect of the Latvia monitoring strategy was collaboration with the stakeholders. This included working with the politicians and informing them of the rules to follow. This made political parties more attentive to how other parties were complying with those rules. The other key stakeholder was the media, which was trained to monitor the political actions. Finally, civil society organizations were instrumental in overseeing the process.

Media Advocacy (Albania experience):

Kreshnik Spahiu explained that in Albania the role of the media is very important because official communication between citizens and government lacks trust and transparency. Aware of its influence on citizens, the media is often abused by politicians for their own interests. The Citizens Advocacy Office (CAO) has developed different strategies to deal with this problem. A strategy of cooperation has been offered to the media, which includes training in investigative journalism. In addition, the CAO moderates public debates related to corruption and other topics. It also conducts advocacy campaigns and provides legal initiatives and promotes them in the media. Finally, the CAO uses the media to pressure and challenge the government and the parliament to be involved in anticorruption issues.

Coalitions and Networks:

Martha Cecilia Villada explained that the creation of networks, coalitions and other alliances are important tools to promote significant social changes in a country. They represent the interests of many citizens and groups that are diverse, plural and inclusive. In places like Eastern Europe and Latin America, where democracy is being built, citizens cannot abandon spaces where there are opportunities for civil society initiatives.

While often used as synonyms, coalitions are known as more sporadic and informal organizations, while the networks are more formal and tend to involve long term relations among members. To build sustainable coalitions and networks members should identify common interests; develop and encourage strategic alliances with a variety of actors and be very active in maintaining these relations. Working through a network or a coalition provides the possibility to unite a large number of member NGOs according to ability and experience. It also allows for quickly mobilizing and reaching a large number of citizens in various geographic zones. A major challenge of coalitions and networks is to be able to maintain the basic structure and stated values while at the same time, reinventing and adapting as

necessary. In reaching sustainability, coalitions and networks need to be trained in providing services and charging for them.

International and Regional Anticorruption Conventions:

Olga Nazario reviewed some of the international and regional anticorruption conventions presently in force and explained the importance of these instruments as tools for civil society in fighting corruption. She highlighted that the conventions are international agreements that bind the state, regardless of the party or government in power. Several conventions offer monitoring mechanisms that allow for civil society participation. Civil society organizations can use the conventions as an anti-corruption action plan since these conventions outline the requirements for the country. Monitoring reports also suggest the reforms required and civil society can monitor governments' compliance with implementation. Based on the experience with civil society in monitoring the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, Dr. Nazario urged participants to become familiar with their regional conventions and use them. She indicated that of particular interest for post-communist societies in Eastern Europe is the Council of Europe's Group of Countries Against Corruption (GRECO) Action Plan because compliance is a prerequisite for Council membership.

**Main Outcomes**

Participants contributed additional issues of concern to post-communist societies. Among these are:

- Structure and financing of political parties.
- Corporate involvement
- State government capacity
- Strength of anti-corruption agencies
- Independence of the judiciary.
- External pressure for reform (such as joining Council of Europe)
- Access to information

**Main Outputs**

1. Casals & Associates, Inc. will expand an international virtual network, ANTI-CORRUPTION WITHOUT BORDERS, to link together all interested organizations and individuals. This network, already functioning in Latin America, disseminates information, provides a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas and experiences, and serves to identify sources of support and assistance in transparency and accountability initiatives.
2. Summaries of presentations will be available at [www.casals.com](http://www.casals.com)
3. A flyer on "Coalitions and Networks: Opportunities for a Proactive Civil Society" was prepared and distributed for the audience.

**Recommendations, Follow-up Actions**

Participants were asked to take home the issues and tools that were identified during the session, establish priorities according to their own realities and needs, and create an action plan. Ideally, participants will meet at the next TI International Conference to discuss progress achieved during the two intervening years.

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**Workshop Highlights (including interesting quotes)**

1. Participants showed great interest in the session's comparative approach. Some recommended additional work on this particular topic.
2. The Albanian speaker showed an interesting thirty-second television public service announcement (PSA) on fighting corruption produced by TI/Albania and the Citizens Advocacy Office that attracted the audience's attention.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_