

“Time to Wake Up”

Launch of Transparency International first global campaign against corruption



On September 27th 2011, the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA) convened the media, its members and partners at the Press Syndicate for a presentation of Transparency International (TI) first global campaign against corruption following the Arab spring under the themes: “Time to Wake Up”, with the participation of Mr. Mohamad Baalbaki, President of the Press Syndicate.

The opening remarks were pronounced by Mr. Gerard Zovighian, LTA’s Chairman, Mr. Ibrahim Tabet, head of the LTA’s board communication committee and spoke of the campaign, Me. Nada Abdelsater – Abusamra, LTA’s board member, and LTA’s communication coordinator who acted as facilitator Ms.Lamis Hallal.

On this occasion, Mr. Gerard Zovighian, president of LTA, and TI board member declared in his opening remarks: “we thank Mr. Baalbaki for hosting us; this is another indication of the close relationship of LTA with the syndicate to reach the common goals, such as, freedom of expression, access to information and whistle blowers protection.”

Mr. Zovighian stated: « Over the past 18 years, Transparency International (TI) has grown to become one of the world’s most trusted voices in the fight against corruption. From its global research and indexes to the local activism of nearly 90 national chapters worldwide, the

organization has established itself as a strong leader in the anti-corruption movement. We have seen that the lack of democracy and corruption, from the Maghreb to the Gulf were the main causes of the peoples' uprisings in many Arab countries. True, far from being autocratic, Lebanon's political regime suffers from the congenial weakness of the State. However, the political and administrative corruption is as widespread as in other Arab countries, with their devastating economic and social consequences".

"For 12 years, LTA has been relentlessly working to mobilize civil society in the fight against corruption, and we have made numerous proposals to improve good governance at the public and private sector levels. However, there is still much to do, to raise awareness and to instigate change. In Egypt and Tunisia two former presidents and several ministers are being judged for unlawful enrichment in the court of law. Based on the principle that a fish rots from its head, we think that these precedents, are the window of opportunity opened by the « Arab Spring » and these are a unique occasion announcing the end of the impunity enjoyed by corrupt Lebanese politicians and civil servants for so long. This is why LTA decided to participate in the global campaign against corruption that Transparency International (TI) will launch worldwide after the Arab Springs ". 80% of people around the world think their government is corrupt; the same numbers of people are doing nothing about it. Hence the theme of the campaign: « Time to wake up »" Said Zovighian

Mr. Zovighian stressed on the crucial role of the media in fighting corruption and the desire of LTA to strengthen partnerships with the different branches of media.

Ibrahim Tabet, head of the LTA's board communication committee clarified the objectives of the campaign:

Improve awareness of and trust in Transparency International as a leading global anti-corruption organization.

Communicate to a greater number of people TI's anti-corruption message, particularly by showing the heavy cost of corruption on people.

Advocate for change in the behavior of governments, corporations and individuals

Increase citizen participation in the TI Movement

He added that LTA - Lebanon was among the five chapters chosen among 90 TI chapters worldwide to pilot the campaign.

The campaign message and slogan: "Time to wake up" will be conveyed through a wide range of tools from TV commercials, talk shows, documentaries, to press conferences, exclusive press interviews, public forums, and mass sticker distributions. In today's Internet age, social networks like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube will be also widely used as campaign tools.

Ibrahim Tabet thanked in advance the media which have graciously agreed to broadcast the campaign or will do, adding that their names are sure to be cited in the documents and they will of course be invited to all events that follow.

Mr. Tabet word was followed by the projection of the Arabic version of the 30” TV spot produced by TI, the two video testimonies to be broadcasted online and the print ads of the campaign. It will also include a dedicated website enabling interaction between the public and LTA.

Mr. Tabet speech was followed by a PowerPoint presentation of the time to wake up micro site moderated by LTA’s communication coordinator Lamis Hallal. Ms. Hallal in her speech shed the light on the role and objectives of the micro site winch “is a ‘gathering place’ for people looking to find out more about TI and our campaign. « It grabs and educates people, linking them to their national chapters in order to take action. Ms. Hallal added “the micro site is not a “final” destination for people looking to engage with TI; rather, it’s a starting point that draws people in, and then pushes them towards engagement with their national chapters, where real action happens on the ground”.

Last to speak, Me. Nada Abdelsater – Abusamra, LTA’s board member and member of LTA’s board communication committee, made an appeal for the fight against corruption that required the dynamic and active participation of the civil society, as well as the support and the commitment of all media.

In this regard Me. Nada Abdelsater – Abusamra referred to the important role played by youth and the mobilizing power of the new technologies of communication and information in the Arab Spring, unlike the “Nahda”, which concerned just a small group of the intelligentsia. Therefore, any communication strategy against corruption in Lebanon should be considered.” As a pioneer in the defense of freedom in the Arab world, the Lebanese should not be left behind in the movement that aspires to put an end to the impunity of their leaders and should use new media for this purpose”.

Me. Abdelsater – Abusamra added that corruption turns people into slaves of leaders who make the public believe that they are always in need of them to obtain the rights that are rightfully theirs. “Corruption transforms public servants (who are supposed to be a servant of the public) to a despot. In fact democracy can be distorted. In fact, democracy can’t exist in a corrupt system because corruption distorts and misrepresents the whole political phenomenon”.

“Having categorically refused to tolerate the fact that the media turns into accomplices or tools of oppression against corruption, Me. Nada Abdelsater – Abusamra strongly advocated the media to be partners of the people in the anti-corruption campaign which is actually a campaign of enlightenment and liberation”. Said Abdelsater – Abusamra

For more Information: 01388113/4/5 EXT 17