

## **A statement of the Sultanate of Oman's Efforts in Anti-corruption and Integrity Promotion**

Pursuant to Royal Decree No 64/2013 on the approval of the Sultanate's accession to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and based on the Decision of the Council of Ministers on assignment of the follow-up and implementation of the Convention, in addition to State Audit Institution assuming the work of the Anti-Corruption Authority; State Audit Institution has endeavored to carry out all that would contribute to the full realization of this role in line with the reputation and position of the Sultanate of Oman in local, regional and international community. Besides, within the framework of the implementation of the Convention requirements, State Audit Institution has conducted several procedures as follows:

The Sultanate of Oman has completed a review of the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption during the first and second review sessions. The first review session during the period (2011-2015) included a review of the Sultanate of Oman's implementation of the articles of chapters three (criminalization and law enforcement) and four (international cooperation), while the second review session during the period (2017-2021) included a review of the implementation of the articles of Chapters Two (Preventive Measures) and five (Asset Recovery) by the Sultanate of Oman. The compendium of the Sultanate of Oman review report contained a number of successful experiences with regard to the second chapter of the agreement, whereby the delegations participating in the review process praised the legislative status of the Sultanate of Oman in terms of its compatibility with most of the requirements of the Convention provisions, which reflected positively on the review report.

In conjunction with the procedures required to implement the provisions of the Convention, which require a review of the legislative system of the Sultanate of Oman, some relevant laws were issued, namely: the Law on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing promulgated by Royal Decree No. 30/2016, the Penal Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 7/2018, and the Commercial Companies Law promulgated By Royal Decree No. 18/2019.

The Council of Ministers also approved studying the amendment of the Protection of Public Funds and Avoidance of Conflict of Interest Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 112/2011 with the aim of enhancing transparency and government measures taken to combat corruption. State Audit Institution coordinates with the

competent authorities with regard to the amendments on the existing Law to enhance the protection of public funds.

State Audit Institution has also prepared a code of professional conduct for civil employees in the units of the State administrative apparatus, pursuant to the provision of Article (8) of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and it was issued by Decision No. 7/2019 by the Chairman of the Civil Service Council where the Code contained a number of legal articles related to general provisions, public duties, employee duties, financial declaration, protection of public fund and the method of using technology when performing job duties. Moreover, the Code applies to all civil employees in the units of the State administrative apparatus, except those for whom special codes of Professional conduct are issued in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

Pursuant to the provisions of Article (5) of the aforementioned Convention, State Audit Institution has prepared the National Plan for Enhancing Integrity 2022-2030; whereby regional and international experiences in the field of national strategies were explored and studied, and the publications of the competent international organizations were drawn upon as a general framework that guides the role of the government and society in order to coordinate and synergize the efforts of the public and private sectors, the community and all parties working on oversight and accountability. This plan aims to achieve a number of main objectives, namely:

- 1- Promoting integrity and combating corruption in accordance with an effective legislative system.
- 2- Coordinating efforts and activating internal cooperation to promote integrity and combat corruption.
- 3- Fostering a culture of integrity and combating corruption in the community.
- 4- Strengthening regional and international cooperation in the fields of integrity and combating corruption.

The plan contains a mechanism for implementing the role of the relevant entities in order to achieve awareness and integrity in the community, and defines each of those entities' roles to participate actively in promoting integrity and combating corruption.

In accordance with the path set by the legislator in the State Audit Law promulgated by Royal Decree No. 111/2011 and the said Law on the Protection of Public Fund and Avoidance of Conflict of Interest, the Institution implements its responsibilities in a number of irregularities that fall within the acts considered as corruption cases by the provisions of Chapter III “Criminalization and Law Enforcement” of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The laws applicable in the Sultanate of Oman also criminalize such acts as the Institution follows up the legal proceedings regarding observed suspicions according to an internal regulation, in coordination with the Public Prosecution and the National Center for Financial Information.

The Institution has also developed a number of departments in its organizational structure to meet the Convention requirements, namely: Financial Declarations Department, Complaints & Reports Department, Communication & Media Department and International Organizations Department.

At a steady pace, the Institution seeks to promote integrity, enhance the community culture towards the protection of public fund, consolidate the foundations of self-censorship, and educate young people on the values of integrity, protection of public fund, and community partnership in preserving it. The Institution offers different channels for the community to file reports and complaints, including the complaints and reports window on its website, smartphone applications (SAI APP), via email and fax, or by visiting SAI headquarters or one of its branches in the governorates.

In order to strengthen cooperation with State institutions in combating corruption through exchange of information and experiences of common interest to achieve the desired results, the Institution has concluded a cooperation program with the National Center for Financial Information to exchange information, experiences and skills in areas of common interest.

The Institution attaches great importance to awareness and integrity promotion activities and events. This can be manifested through the implementation of many activities, summarized as follows:

- 1- Preparing and implementing an annual awareness media plan that includes various awareness activities such as awareness seminars with the aim of raising awareness, promoting integrity and disseminating knowledge to the community

about protection of public fund and promotion of integrity in many entities subject to the Institution's audit, educational and civil society institutions in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

2- Disseminating concepts related to promotion of integrity and combating corruption in local newspapers and social media accounts, and continuing to produce “Nazaha” program on various television and radio channels, as well as continuing to produce the radio program “Oversight is Everyone’s Responsibility”, broadcasted on Radio Sultanate of Oman.

3- Participating with the local community in the event of "International Anti-Corruption Day", celebrated annually on December 9, by publishing awareness articles, interacting with the community in the Institution's accounts on social media platforms, and broadcasting television reports about the Institution's role in implementing the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

The Institution also issued and published the Community Brief for the year 2020 in accordance with the royal directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on the consolidation of the principles of transparency, integrity and accountability. The Institution published the community Brief to achieve its objectives in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040, which includes the development of an effective and independent oversight system as well as meet the requirements of the tenth five-year plan to enhance transparency and disclosure to serve the development process in the Sultanate of Oman.

At the regional and international levels, the Institution is keen to participate in regional and international meetings, conferences and workshops held in the field of protection of integrity and combating corruption. For example, the Conference of the State Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Arab Convention against Corruption, as well as meetings and activities held at the level of the GCC States which are: the GCC Ministerial Committee on Combating Corruption, meetings of Their Excellencies the Under-Secretaries of the agencies responsible for integrity protection and anti-corruption in the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the meetings of specialists committee in the GCC integrity protection and anti-corruption agencies.

Furthermore, the Institution follows up, observes and analyzes international indicators related to the promotion of integrity and combating corruption, the most important of which is the Corruption Perceptions Index, annually issued.