Georgia’s Anti-Corruption Achievements and Challenges, State and Non-State Efforts

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Georgia’s case - changes by numbers

2016

• Score 57/100 - Corruption Perception Index (CPI) by Transparency International (TI) - ranks 44th among 176 states and consistently remains the first in the region.

• Heritage Foundation in Economic Freedom, Georgia score 72.6 with the ranking 23rd globally (among 178 countries) and 12th in the region. Georgia is ahead of such countries as Finland, Sweden, and Norway.

2002

• Score 2.4 / 10.0 – CPI by TI Transparency International, Georgia ranks 85th among 102 states.
GEORGIA’S CASE – ELIMINATING CORRUPT PRACTICES

- The going “rate” to become a traffic cop was $2,000–$20,000 in bribes in 2003.
- Georgians had no more than seven to eight hours of power (electricity) a day in 2003.
- In 2003, for businesses to operate, 909 permits and licenses were required. By 2011, the number of permits and licenses had been reduced to 137.
- In 2003, Georgia’s tax base included just 80,000 taxpayers, and tax collections brought in just 12 percent of GDP. By 2010, the income tax base had increased to about 252,000 taxpayers, and collections represented 25 percent of GDP.
- Bribes for university entrance were common before 2003, with university spots sold for $8,000–$50,000, depending on the department (admission to law school and medical school cost the most).

Source: The Word bank 2012 Report
GOVERNMENT’S EFFORTS

Pre “Rose Revolution” efforts:
- 2000 and 2001 anti-corruption initiatives – Anti-Corruption Council and Buiro
- Adoption of first set legislative acts (including Financial Declarations Reporting for public servants and FOIA Law)

Post “Rose Revolution” efforts, *Inter alia*:
- Prosecution of high ranking officials: 2003 – 2010 up to 1000 public officials have been charged with corruption offences
- Adoption of new anti-corruption legislation and an anti-corruption strategy and action plan; “Zero Tolerance Policy” in prosecution
- Complete overhaul of the Police service (15,000 police personnel fired, patrol police established, salaries raised)
- The size of the public sector dramatically cut; taxes cut from total 21 (types) to 6, reduced regulations and simplified procedures for doing business
WHAT PLAYED POSITIVE ROLE

- Change of power, public support and momentum for reform
- Ideology of small government
- Unconventional methods and new approaches in governance
- Political leadership
- Ability to attract new staff
- Economic incentives for anti-corruption reforms
- External environment
DRAWBACKS OF THE REFORM

- Policy choice - Major emphases on *Prosecution* rather than *Prevention*
- More emphases on fast/flexible initiatives with leading rule of law enforcement actors, rather than process based on strategies and APs and coordination done by “civil”, specialized agency
- Success with eradication of petty corruption, but strengthening of “elite corruption” and “clientelistic system”; increased practice of “cronyism”
- Over-strengthening of the Executive and weakening the Legislative and the Judiciary
DRAWBACKS OF THE REFORM, CONT.

- “Zero Tolerance Policy” with weak, non-independent judiciary resulting in miscarriages of justice (by 2012 – up to 24,000 prison population with systemic practice of ill-treatment of prisoners)
- Increased trust towards the patrol police, but also increased feeling of impunity for the crimes committed by the law enforcement bodies
- Improved legislation on public servants financial/property transparency and FOIA law, but challenges in enforcement vis-à-vis to high government actors
ROLE OF CSOs

Increasing role of CSOs (NGOs) from late 90s up to “Rose Revolution”; Post-Rose revolution euphoria (up to 2007) and re-emergence of the need for watchdog work

Advocating change

- Demanding and supplying—advocating and participating in elaboration of anti-corruption policies, legislative and reform initiatives
- Prior to “Rose Revolution”—CSOs and media engaged in active anti-corruption campaigns; investigatory journalism; FOIA and transparency campaigns; Election observation and “Kmara” movement
- Post “Rose Revolution”—Continues CSOs watchdog activity – GYLA’s “Georgian Government under sunshine”; TI’s “Who Owns Georgia”
ROLE OF CSOs, CONT.

Supporting appropriate legislative reforms

- Financial/property declaration system
- FOIA legislation
- Internal control – reform of the general inspectors offices
Shadow reporting towards the “weak spots” for corruption

- Monitoring of the work of the State Audit Agency
- Monitoring of the “special reserve funds” of President, Government and City municipalities; Public broadcaster; National communication commission, etc.
- Monitoring defense and security spending
- Supporting independent journalist groups to carry our anti-corruption investigations

Using new technology and innovative methods

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Advocating for strengthening democratic institutions

- Improvement of Parliamentary oversight on the Executive
- Improvement of the judicial independence and accountability
- Fighting against impunity from the side of the law enforcement bodies and top public officials
- Supporting freedom of media - transparency of media ownership; electronic media, investigatory journalism
- Supporting participatory democracy process with CSOs involvement in policy making process
GEORGIA’S CASE – LESSONS LEARNED

- *Fair balance* between prosecution and prevention; need for institutionalized machinery to reflect on achievements and drawbacks in a continuous manner

- *Fair fight* against corruption – effective, potentially slow, but sustainable

- *Institutional reform* of governance – democratic institutions building, based on internal check & balances: Strong legislative/policy maker and controller, effective Executive, politically independent prosecution and independent judiciary

- *Inherited engagement* of CSOs in policy making process; acceptance of watchdog work; combining collaborative projects (OGP).
Thank you for your attention!

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