

Vietnam needs to create a mechanism for regular collaboration and consultation between the State and civil society organisations in anti-corruption

Towards Transparency (TT) – National Contact of Transparency International (TI) in Vietnam – recognises roles and participation of civil society organisations in Vietnam in anti-corruption over the recent decade. On the other hand, we acknowledge a number of significant barriers established by the current legal framework and practice in the country that are hindering the active participation of civil society organisations in this field. For instance, the Law on Anti-corruption and Decree No 47 have not provided any specific regulations on roles and responsibilities of civil society organisations except for the Vietnam Fatherland Front and its organisation members.

On the International Anti-Corruption Day (9/12/2016), TT recommends that **the State and the Government of Vietnam consider establishing a mechanism for regular and open collaboration between the State and civil society organisations.**

According to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) to which Vietnam has become a state party since 2009, the Government of Vietnam is responsible for promoting and protecting the participation of individuals and organisations from non-state sectors in preventing and fighting corruption. The top leaders of the State and Government have also verbally emphasised the significant roles of society in anti-corruption. Now, TT calls for the State and the Government to **realize their commitments by setting up a mechanism for periodical collaboration and consultation between the State and civil society organisations other than the Vietnam Fatherland Front, such as a number of associations, Vietnamese non-government organisations, non-profit companies and community-based organisations.**

Also, in order to ensure that civil society organisations can optimize their strengths and become trusted partners of the State in mobilising participation of society in anti-corruption, the State needs to **provide concrete regulations on roles and responsibilities of the above-mentioned organisations in the Law on Anti-corruption as well as in relevant laws and policies.**

In Vietnam, besides the Fatherland Front and its members, more and more civil society organisations are working on anti-corruption related fields. In fact,

with comprehensive knowledge on local context and capacity of accessing and selecting suitable international practices, a number of civil society organisations have been **making valuable contributions to authorised state agencies in the improvement of mechanisms, laws and policies on anti-corruption**. For instance, when Vietnam was reviewing the draft Law on Access to Information, the People Participation Working Group (PPWG) – a network of civil society organisations – provided comments relating to the development of this law in many thematic conferences and policy dialogues. As a result, a number of comments and recommendations of PPWG were reflected in the law.

Civil society organisation have also frequently conducted quality studies on corruption and anti-corruption, **providing state agencies and citizens with specific evidences for policy development**, such as “Provincial Administration Performance Index” (PAPI) conducted by CECODES and UNDP, “Vietnam Youth Integrity Survey” by CECODES, TT and Live & Learn...Data from these studies have been cited in report on anti-corruption of state agencies (YIS) and used as a reference indicator in administration reform carried out by multiple provinces in Vietnam (PAPI).

Besides, many civil society organisations have implemented **activities to communicate legal information on transparency and information disclosure in land, tax and local budget, grass-root democracy, complaint and denunciations, and anti-corruption to people**. For instance, among initiatives supported by the Vietnam Anti-Corruption Initiatives (VACI) organised by the Government Inspectorate of Vietnam and World Bank (2009-2015), RTCCD and MEC are organisations that implemented various activities such as workshop, training, online forum, policy dialogue, communication contest...to disseminate information and provide citizens with knowledge. By using participatory approaches, these activities have proven their effectiveness.

Observing the above-mentioned contributions, we believe that as long as the State secures legal regulations and creates a mechanism for open and continuous collaboration with civil society organisations, Vietnam will achieve its anti-corruption goals in more effective and sustainable manners. On one hand, such mechanism will help state agencies and local authorities solve bottle-neck situations in managing activities of civil society organisations, and optimise the resources of civil society organisations for implementing activities. On the other hand, a more regular consultation mechanism will bring Vietnam closer to the standards set by UNCAC regarding the participation of non-state individuals and organisations.