



Why Anti-Corruption Crusades Often Fail to Win Lasting Victories

Presentation by Guido Bertucci, Director
Division for Public Economics and Public Administration
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations



Anti-Corruption Summit 2000
Arlington, Virginia: 21 September 2000

Introduction

- ☞ definition of anti-corruption crusades:
 - announcements by an organization that concerted action will be taken to fight corruption



Levels of Crusades

- ☞ international or regional
- ☞ national
- ☞ sub-national
- ☞ ministry or agency



Sectors Sponsoring Crusades

- government
- private sector
- civil society: religious groups, NGOs



Reasons for Crusade Failures

- political
- administrative



Political Reasons

- simple lip service
- witch hunts → military coups
- lack of buy-in from social partners
- elections, shift in political priorities



Administrative Reasons

- ☞ applying “wholesale” solutions
- ☞ losing interest in “housekeeping” activities
- ☞ rolling back reforms



Lessons to be Learned

- ☞ “failure” can be the step before success
- ☞ at political level, crusades need:
 - genuine commitment
 - to be protected from politicization
 - to be inclusive and participatory
- ☞ at administrative level, crusades need:
 - to take into account unique conditions
 - to consistently apply adapted solutions
 - to reassess activities having unintended results



UN Approach to Corruption

- ☞ holistic → deal with underlying causes and not only symptoms
- ☞ complementary preventive and enforcement approaches:
 - legal
 - social
 - economic



Role of the UN

- promote the exchange of experiences
- provide technical advice
- 2 major initiatives:
 - African Public Service Charter
 - Public Service Ethics in Africa: a comparative study



Conclusion

- ☞ anti-corruption crusades by themselves do not work but should be part of a long-term, multi-faceted, comprehensive strategy
- ☞ UN has an information brokering role to assist Member States





Public Economics and
Public Administration

Contact

Division:

www.un.org/esa/governance

Mr. Guido Bertucci
Director
UN DESA/DPEPA
One UN Plaza
New York, NY, 10017
USA
Tel: (+1-212) 963-5761
Fax: (+1-212) 963-2916
E-mail: bertucci@un.org

