

AIDE-MEMOIRE

10 May 1999

Title: Briefing on *Desktop Ethics for Today's Public Officials*

Sponsors: Australian Mission to the United Nations

&

United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Public Economics and Public Administration

Date: Thursday, 20 May 1999
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Location: **UNICEF House, Henry Labouisse Hall**
United Nations Headquarters
New York, New York, USA

Background

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Public Economics and Public Administration (UN/DESA/DPEPA) has been carrying out a range of activities in the area of civil service reform and public sector ethics. They include organizing regional conferences on civil service professionalism and ethics, a SPPD study in public service ethics in Africa, and technical cooperation activities upon request. DPEPA also participates in a number of networks in this substantive area, such as the OECD/USAID Anti-Corruption Network in Central and Eastern Europe, and is plugged into a number of “informal” networks.

Through its contacts, DPEPA learned that a 5 CD-ROM interactive training set, the *Public Sector Ethics Resource Series*, was launched in Australia, February 1999. This two-year, A\$600,000 project was developed on behalf of a consortium of federal and state level public services of Australia and New Zealand, to serve as training material. The CD-ROM Series has been featured at a workshop run by the International Institute of Public Ethics and Vice-President Gore’s Global Forum Against Corruption, held in Washington D.C. It will also form the basis of a training programme for a number of government departments in Australia and the US, including the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

DPEPA learned that Mr. Howard Whitton -- this Project’s Manager, the Secretary-General of the International Institute for Public Ethics, and an expert who has written extensively in this field -- will be in New York from 19 - 21 May 1999 to train Australian Foreign Service Officers with the CD-ROM series. To take advantage of his presence at no cost to the UN, DPEPA proposes to hold a demonstration session of this new tool for the UN community. There have been informal discussions with Mr. Whitton, who has informed us that the Australian government, through its Permanent Mission to the UN, would like to co-host such a session.

Objectives

The objective for organizing such a briefing session for the Permanent Missions to the UN is to highlight the importance of countering corruption and promoting ethics among public officials as well as to inform them about UN/DESA/DPEPA’s work. It is also to bring to the attention of the Member States the latest, cutting-edge developments in this area to explore whether such innovative training technology could be adapted for use in their countries. The UN could play a valuable role in assisting Member States in this regard through appropriately adapting the basic material to fit the cultural and socio-economic contexts of the major developing regions.

Issues to be discussed

It is envisioned that the demonstration session would be opened by a host from UN/DESA who would outline the importance of fighting corruption and promoting public sector ethics to development, world-wide, and UN/DESA’s role and work in this area. These short remarks would be followed by a host from the Australian Mission who would introduce the Project and suggest that the format of the CD’s could have a useful applicability for other countries. The presenter, Mr. Whitton, would then demonstrate segments from the CD-ROM set and take questions. The general focus of the demonstration session would be to explore whether and how such a tool could be adapted for use by developing countries.

Output

Depending on the reaction of the audience and the issues raised during the discussion, UN/DESA/DPEPA could then explore with Mr. Whitton and the Government of Australia a way forward for adapting and financing a similar series for developing regions.

Timing - Venue

In order to take advantage of Mr. Whitton's presence in New York, it is proposed that the demonstration session take place on Thursday 20 May 1999, from 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. in a UN Conference Room.

Participants

All the Permanent Missions to the UN would be invited and informed through the UN Daily Journal. In addition, those countries which were invited to UN/DESA/DPEPA's regional conferences, in Africa as well as Central and Eastern Europe, would receive a special notice. The Australian Permanent Mission itself may wish to extend special invitations.

Administrative Arrangements

UN/DESA/DPEPA would book a Conference Room, look into obtaining required equipment, and undertake any hospitality duties. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is also looking into obtaining required equipment, in addition to organizing Mr. Whitton's visit to New York.

Languages

English and French would be advised.

c:\mydocuments\administration\deskaid.wpd