

## Ahead of international launch in 2018, Namibia hosts final regional preparatory meeting for justice system anti-corruption initiative

In line with the Global Sustainable Development Goal 16 - to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions – UNODC continues to focus on increasing access and accountability within the justice system to address the global targets of Goal 16. As a result, the final regional preparatory meeting for the Global Judicial Integrity Network (GJIN) was held in Namibia from 16-17 October. Chief Justices and senior judges from 17 countries discussed the world’s first-ever global platform dedicated exclusively to upholding judicial integrity and preventing corruption within the justice system, to be launched in April 2018.

The meeting was jointly hosted by UNODC and the Office of the Judiciary of the Republic of Namibia. Critically, it allowed those present to share their needs and expectations in capacity-building support, advisory services, tools, networking opportunities and other resources and how best to meet them.

In their opening statements, Chief Justice of Namibia, H.E. Peter Shivute, and UNODC Southern Africa Regional Representative, Zhuldyz Akisheva, highlighted the critical importance of judicial integrity. “To ensure that integrity becomes the bedrock of all our work and interactions as judicial officers, we must continually inculcate the values of honesty, fairness and justice in all that we do”, noted Chief Justice Shivute.



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Adding to this, Ms. Akisheva said, “The judiciary plays a crucial role in combatting corruption, but in order to fulfil this, they themselves must be free from corruption. This final preparatory meeting provides members of the judiciaries [...] an important forum to discuss challenges being faced and expectations towards what the Network will offer”.

Reflecting the international linkages of the GJIN in sharing cross-border solutions, the meeting was joined by the Honourable President Chief Justice of the Peoples’ Supreme Court of Cuba, Ruben Remigio Ferro who stated, “The mission of judges is not to be simple enforcers of norms and dispositions to the case before them, but also implies the duty to do so with a clear notion and sense of what is fair”. He also added his Cuban experience, where “exercising judicial power implies, in turn, the commitment to comply with judicial duty”.

The meeting proved highly successful as participants shared innovative approaches which have created Codes of Conduct and held judges accountable. Attendees spoke of specific challenges, including continuous attempts of the executive and legislature in some countries to interfere with judicial decision-making and appointments. The participants welcomed the proposal to launch a GJIN to allow further exchange on issues of mutual concern, access resources and capacity building opportunities, and to develop new tools.

The creation of the GJIN is part of UNODC’s Global Programme for the Implementation of the 2015 Doha Declaration. The Global Programme provides support and technical assistance to Member States across the world in judicial integrity, prisoners’ rehabilitation, youth crime prevention, and education for justice, all to promote a culture of lawfulness and boost respect for the rule of law.